



READY FIRST BRIGADE NEWSLETTER

COL Sean MacFarland, Commander
1LT Will Bardenwerper, PAO
SGT Michael Hartman, PA NCO
March 2006



1st BDE and 3rd Iraqi Army Division soldiers board a UH-60 Blackhawk after an air assault mission.



A soldier from the Brigade Recon Troop interacts with locals south of Baij.



Soldiers from the 3rd Iraqi Army Division and from the BRT conduct air assault operation.

A Busy Month As Ready First Settles In

By: SGT Hartman

The Ready First Combat Team recently completed its first month of responsibility for Western Ninevah Province in Iraq. The Brigade Combat Team hit the ground running, launching actions across the Area of Operations.

Beginning with Operation Ready Lancer, the brigade has already built strong relationships with our Iraqi Army and police counterparts, incorporating them into two air assault missions aimed at catching insurgents off-guard and disrupting their movements, with success illustrated by the decline in enemy activity throughout our area.

Meanwhile, in the town of Hit, the Spartans have settled in with the Marines 7th RCT, where they have performed extraordinarily under difficult and austere conditions. However, through their actions along with those of the Marines, the security situation in the city has improved.

As March draws near an end, the weather is beginning to show signs of heating up, but the brigade shows no signs of letting up in their efforts to bring peace and stability to the area.



The sun sets behind a mosque in Tal Afar.



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1-36INF

“SPARTANS”



Introduction to Hit

Hit, pronounced by the locals as “Heat”, is a small town located along the Euphrates river, northwest of Ar Ramadi in the Al Anbar province of Iraq. The town has a storied past as the source of the ancient world’s black gold...Tar. Legend holds that Hit was the source of the caulking material for Noah’s Ark as well as a lucrative trade city. While it seems that tar has recently fallen from favor as a petroleum product of international importance, the town of Hit remains an influential political and social center within Al Anbar.

Enter: Task Force 1-36. At the request of the Marine headquarters in control of Al Anbar, the Spartans were selected to play a key role in rebuilding this troubled province. The Spartans arrived in Hit in early February, taking control of the sector from the 22nd Marine Expeditionary Unit. With a year long deployment, the Spartans brought with them the chance to impart stability to an area that has seen many coalition forces come and go over the past year.

Task Force Spartan quickly spread out into the city, integrating with the residents and acclimating to their new surroundings. Team Axe, attached from 1-37 AR, took up residence on the far side of the Euphrates from Hit, across one of the few bridges to span the river for many miles up and down stream. Team Raider, coming to the Task Force from 1-6 Infantry in Baumholder, occupied the city center within Hit. Team Highlander and Team Apache occupied the old Marine base of Camp Hit as well as taking up controlling positions along the roads and routes throughout the Spartan area of operations. The Task Force also grew in size, incorporating specialized Army and Marine units that helped support the Task Force logistics train and granted additional intelligence gathering assets.

The Spartans also began to conduct operations with their sister Iraqi Army battalion located within the city.

Operating in Hit proved to be no easy task as Soldiers were immediately faced with the realities of enemy IED attacks, mortars, and small arms fire. From day one, the Spartans had to fight to assert themselves and the Iraqi government as the controlling force in Hit. At the same time, Soldiers throughout the AO had to put in extra hours to establish life support and suitable living conditions that would carry them through the year. Support elements worked overtime feeding, outfitting, planning, and defending the Task Force.

Even in the face of concerted enemy attacks, the Spartans began their assault on the terrorist networks and criminal elements operating in the city. Within weeks, the Task Force began to pull in high profile insurgents, putting a significant dent in the insurgency’s leadership and day to day operations.

The Spartans will continue to build on their early success in Hit, working hard to strengthen rapport with both the town’s residents and their Iraqi Army counterparts. In time, the city of Hit may again grow to be a symbol of prosperity and cooperation in Al Anbar, just as it was in ancient times.



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1-37AR “BANDITS”



BANDITS HAVING FUN EXECUTING MISSION

By CPT Aaron B. Dixon

We couldn't have asked for a more user-friendly part of Iraq in which to be stationed. The climate is much milder than the humid river valleys around Baghdad. It even snowed on us here at the base of Sinjar Mountain in February! The mountain itself makes for some refreshing scenery both at the base and at the summit. 2nd Platoon, B Co. 1-37 stopped to visit the Yezidi Temple at the summit before venturing back down the winding 4x4 trail to FOB Bandit. Mingling with the diversely-mixed ethnic groups consistently keeps things interesting.

The Bandits continue to set the standard as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. Not only do we patrol every day to bring security to this area, but we also have been striving to improve the lives of the Iraqi civilians. Since our arrival, we have opened many new health clinics and plan to supervise more improvements over the months to come. In general, the population supports our efforts, affording us the opportunity to “donkey-around” with the locals.

Keeping ourselves active, we continue to conduct tactical operations both day and night that have been successful in both defeating insurgent activity in this area and bolstering our partnership with the Iraqi Security Forces. The Bandits have taken a liking to our Iraqi Army brothers and hope to impart all the knowledge and experience we can on them before the eventual day on which we have to leave this area entirely in their control.



Members of B 1-37 at the Yezidi temple.



On a break from a 1-37 mission to one of the local villages, SGT Moore gets a donkey-riding lesson from one of the village kids.



A Yezidi temple on a summit of Sinjar Mountain.



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2-37AR
“IRON DUKES”



Dukes and Iraqi Army Conduct Joint Operations

Early in the morning of March 10th, the soldiers of Bravo Company, Task Force 2-37 Armor, moved into their appointed cordon positions in the Al Sa'ad district of Tal Afar, Iraq. As soon as the cordon was set, dozens of the soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Iraqi Army BDE moved in to begin searching houses in the area. The soldiers of the Iraqi Army Battalion were tipped off by locals about terrorists living in the neighborhood. For over ten hours, the soldiers of 'Battle Company' and the Iraqi soldiers moved house to house alongside their Iraqi Army brothers in arms.

By the time the dust had settled, the soldiers were well rewarded for their effort. They detained sixty-three Anti-Iraqi Forces, to include makers of Improvised Explosive Devices, financiers, and men who were wanted for crimes in Tal Afar. Also, the soldiers confiscated I.E.D. making material to include initiators and explosives. 1SG Wyatt of B CO, 2-37 said, "It just shows that we have popular support. The citizens of Iraq are the ones that are helping us capture and defeat the insurgents."

The soldiers of the Iron Dukes have been busy balancing the combat operations in Tal Afar with continuing to renovate schools, establishing Iraqi Police Stations and training Iraqi Police and Iraqi Army. In the last month, the Dukes have integrated and trained over 700 new Iraqi Police, who conduct joint operations daily with the soldiers from Task Force 2-37 AR. The missions range from patrols to checkpoints to security for infrastructure. Often times the bond of soldiers with a common goal and mission overcomes the language and cultural barriers. The U.S. forces laugh and joke with the Iraqi forces as they share their supplies and prepare to patrol together.



2-37 and Iraqi Army soldiers move into and establish the cordon for their morning operation



2-37 soldiers pull security in Tal Afar, Iraq



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2-3 FA REGT "GUNNERS"



"Shaking off the Mud"

FOB Sykes, Iraq—

By *1LT McKenna*

With 3rd ACR gone and the frequent showers of February behind us, the Gunners have shaken off the mud and taken full control of the mission at hand. Our Joint Coordination Centers (JCC) spread throughout the area are in full swing and making progress interacting with the neighboring cities and local Iraqi Security Forces. Charlie Battery is set in two locations ready to protect the maneuver units with precision fires. Additionally, Service Battery is training the future leaders of the Iraqi Army and Police.

We have officially marked February as the "Month of Mud" here in Tall Afar. The fine, clay-like sand combined with the daily showers produced a mud-caked month for all the Gunners. Keeping the Containerized Housing Unit (CHU) clean was difficult to say the least. Most also learned to walk differently, with an extra 5 pounds of mud on each foot. The new color on the Army Combat Uniform (ACU)... mud brown. Now that we've had a string of sunny days, everyone is glad that the mud is gone.

As you'll read in this issue, TF 2-3 is making good progress. It's now a matter of staying the course, staying safe, and keeping our focus on the task at hand. The Soldiers of 2-3 are doing a great job, they're ready, and they are very



*SPC Griffin (C Btry) poses with Iraqi Army Soldiers.
Photo by CPT Crenshaw.*

"Making Progress"

Tall Afar, Iraq—

By *SFC Sokolowski*

During the month of February, numerous events have occurred in the Tall Afar JCC. The Ready First JCC crew transferred authority from 3rd ACR's crew and then ran with the ball. Many changes have taken place to streamline the response time of Iraqi Police and Army in the community. Communication that was missing has been established and is now part of the JCC's operating procedures. Coordination between Coalition Forces (CF) and Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) is at an all time high.

The ISF are requesting joint missions to ensure insurgents in the area are identified and brought to justice. On that subject, several of the most notorious insurgents have been detained and are being prosecuted by the Iraqi system. These arrests have led to a calming feeling among the residents of Tall Afar, and more tips and leads on suspected insurgents have been the positive result.



SPC McClure helps SPC Rodriguez and PFC O'Shields prepare for a convoy. Photo by 1LT McKenna.



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16TH ENGINEER "CATAMOUNTS"



Position Improvement in Tal Afar

By: 1LT Cecelia Orlando

An integral part of the 16th Engineer Battalion's mission in Tal Afar is improving the quality of life for the Soldiers, both Iraqi and U.S, living and working in the area. When FOB Sykes was first occupied by U.S. Forces, way back in 2003, it was only an airstrip and eleven air hangers. Since then, it has been built up to create a passable home away from home in Northwest Iraq. Where once tents once stood there are containerized housing units, chemical toilets were swapped for flushing ones, a mess tent and MREs were replaced by a dining facility serving four hot meals a day, and a Multi-Use Facility complete with a gym, movie theater, internet, and phones has been erected. All these facilities help to make life on FOB Sykes a little more comfortable for everyone involved. While upgrades on the FOB continue, the focus has shifted to the outlying areas. Captain Jeff Braun, of the 16th Engineer Battalion, has been charged with the responsibility of overseeing this mission.

Soldiers operating 'outside the wire,' are not usually afforded the same luxuries as those inside, on the FOB. Their living conditions are typically far more spartan. The Catamounts are working to change this. SSG Jason O'Connor has undertaken the job of acquiring the necessary materials for these projects. His expertise in carpentry and electricity have already been put to use enhancing the work environment for the Catamounts. He is the man on the ground making sure things run smoothly. Assisted by a platoon from the 505th HSC and local contractors, old Iraqi buildings are being rewired to provide heat and electricity, as well as internal structural modifications to enhance the living areas for the Soldiers. It is unlikely that a PX will be established on every location, but enhancing facilities in order to provide better meals and a warm place to sleep are always a positive.

Enhancements to force protection measures serve to improve the quality of life for Soldiers by creating a safer and more stable operating environment. Current projects include the building of 2 Iraqi Police Stations, upgrading Iraqi checkpoints along major routes, road construction, and border fortification. These projects will continue throughout the year as efforts progress toward providing soldiers with a better living and working environment.



Posing for a picture with Iraqi Army soldiers.



The uncasing of the 16th Engineer colors, at FOB Sykes.



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501st FSB "PROVIDERS"



FOB Sykes drown in mud.



Pulling security on a CLP.



Performing maintenance on an M113 engine.

IMPROVING THE FOXHOLE

Since completing our Relief-in-Place (RIP) with the Regimental Support Squadron (RSS)) of the 3rd ACR, the Providers continue to improve the working and living condition here in Iraq, while simultaneously providing continuous Combat Service Support (CSS) to the Ready First Combat Team. Since our last newsletter, we completed our move into our new CHUs (Container Housing Units), which gives everyone a good deal more living space and less crowded latrine and shower conditions. Moreover, we established and occupied the new battalion TOC (Tactical Operations Center), Alpha Company and Bravo Battery moved into their new Command Posts, and the mud has finally disappeared allowing us to properly arrange our work areas. The motor pool will receive a new maintenance tent and the medical supply point will undergo a facilities upgrade. Additionally, improvements are also underway at the Supply Support Activity (SSA) and Direct Support maintenance facilities. All of these improvements are paying dividends in helping the Providers accomplish their primary mission of supporting the Brigade and improving the working conditions in all our commodity and support areas. Thanks to the 16th Engineer Battalion and their construction support for the improvements to the Brigade-Division Internment Facility (B-DIF) operated by HHC with augmentation from across the battalion and a platoon of soldiers from Service Battery/2-3FA. We also would like to welcome the SSA civilian contractor support and the soldiers from the 101st Sustainment Brigade transportation platoon who are here to support our medium and heavy truck distribution missions.

As we enter our third month of supporting combat operations for the RFCT, we express our thanks to our families back home who have done so much to support us. A special thanks goes out to all those who have sent numerous letters, care packages, and expressions of hope. Your support means everything.

PROVIDERS!



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A/141 SIGNAL "GATORS"



SPC Black, SPC Dugan, and SFC Brady fly to Kisik aboard a UH-60 Blackhawk to conduct maintenance training for the Iraqi Signal Company.



SPC Dugan teaches the Iraqi how to correctly perform vehicle maintenance.



Hardworking Soldiers from the V3 Section conduct a Relief in Place with B/29th SIG.

GREETINGS TO THE GATOR FAMILY!

By CPT CASON GREEN/1SG CALVIN MISTER
Alpha Company Commander/First Sergeant

Hello from Tall Afar, Iraq. The Gators continue their hard work in support of OIF 05-07. Our Node Centers and SENs have now replaced numerous assemblages from B/29th SIG. Our Soldiers worked very hard at the beginning of this month to put in their shots and continue the great communications support that First Brigade is used to having. Some of our SENs are on outsites away from FOB Sykes. I can assure you all that they are doing an excellent job and are receiving the same support that everyone here at FOB Sykes is receiving. Also, SGT Franklin's SEN, H13, has returned back to the Gators with SPC Orocio, SPC Freeman, PFC Davenport, and PV2 Gilmore. These Soldiers are now at FOB Sykes to continue their communications mission. SPC Strickland is also now here with the rest of A/141 SIG. We have a new Soldier to welcome to A/141 SIG- SGT Maupin joins us from Ft. Drum, NY.

The Gators have also been continuing their ongoing mission to train the Iraqi Army on both communications and general Army knowledge classes. This is a tough mission, but the hard work will soon pay off, as the Iraqis grow ever more proficient

The Environmental Moral Leave program is up and running. We have nine Soldiers taking leave in March, and we are scheduled to have ten slots per month through December. A Company held a lottery for the most popular months (June, July, and August). This was the fairest way to determine who received these slots. All Soldiers that requested leave have been slated. We will do our best, but please understand that the dates are subject to change.

Gator re-enlistment continues at a torrid pace. SSG Berisha and SGT Resto have both recently raised their right hands and pledged to continue to serve the Army. Due to their outstanding efforts, many Gators are continuing to get promoted. PFC Lee and PFC Wood have been promoted to Specialist. Congratulations to these hardworking individuals.

Most of all, a heart-felt thank you to all of the spouses back at home for all of the support that you have given the Soldiers. The videos that you made at the FRG meeting were distributed to each Soldier involved and were very popular. We couldn't do it without you.

IRON GATORS LEAD THE WAY!



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BDE Chaplain

Chaplain Mike Wood



God Has Plans For You!

In Jeremiah 29:11, God tells the Israelites that he has plans for them; good plans; plans to give them a future and a hope! At the time the Israelites were enduring 70 years of exile in Babylon. Things looked pretty grim at that moment, but God assures them through Jeremiah, saying, "Settle in. Build houses, plant gardens, get married...live life, and hope for the future!" We should do the same thing in our one year "exile" to Babylon. Settle in, execute the mission, do your job, make friends, improve your living conditions and look forward to the return trip. The more honorably you serve, the sweeter your return will be!

In the bigger picture, God has plans for each of us. He desires the best for His children. He delights in us (Psalm 37:23-24). Jesus makes this analogy in Matthew 7:9-11. He said, "Which of you, if your child asks you for a fish would give him a snake? Or if your child asks for bread would give him a stone?...How much more will your heavenly Father give good gifts to those who ask him!"

God has a spot for you in His master plan and He is pleased when you discover your calling and execute it with vigor. God is glorified by your obedience. What does it mean to "glorify" God? I liken it to making your parents proud. When you received a good grade in school, your parents beamed...they were glorified! When my daughter sings in church, I feel so proud I could burst. I radiate pleasure in the good work and obedience of my child.

God has a plan for you. Seek Him and discover what it is. Obey Him and you will feel the pleasure of His smile. He will be glorified and you will be satisfied and fulfilled.

Ready Shepherd
CH Mike Wood



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Avian flu: fact and fiction

By David Brennen, MD and J. Scott Huitink, MD

News media around the world have been reporting on the “outbreak” of avian flu (also known as “bird flu”). Friends and family back home, already worried about our safety in the midst of firefights and convoys, now add avian flu to their list of concerns. With the many rumors circulating, a clear understanding of the reality of this virus is necessary to prevent both avian flu AND undue panic from spreading.

What is avian flu?

Influenza virus can be broadly categorized into three major groups, A, B, and C. Influenza A has approximately 140 subtypes. These subtypes can be found in birds, pigs, horses, or humans, and rarely cross from one animal to another. One particular influenza subtype infecting birds, H5N1, has recently been identified in humans. This influenza subtype is responsible for what is known as “avian” or “bird flu”. Just like with other cases of influenza, an infected person will develop symptoms of fever, headache, muscle aches, and a dry, non-productive cough. Rarely, these symptoms progress to difficulty breathing, and in severe cases even death.

Why does this concern us?

The particular virus that causes bird flu (H5N1) has not been previously seen in humans. Therefore, there is little immunity or natural protection against the disease. In addition, infection with H5N1 seems to result in a more severe illness. Avian flu infection has been identified as the cause of death in several people. On 2 February 2006, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) confirmed a case of avian flu resulting in the death of a 15 year old girl in the town of Raniya, Iraq, along the Turkish border. This is approximately 300 km from FOB Sykes. Currently, there are 2 other cases from the same area that may have been caused by avian flu. These cases are under investigation by the CDC.

Who's at risk?

While the presence of avian flu near FOB Sykes is concerning, an outbreak is unlikely in U.S. soldiers. Virtually all cases of avian flu have been found in people with very close contact with birds. The rare cases of human-to-human transmission of the virus occurred in people who had close contact with someone infected with avian flu. For example, one case of suspected human-to-human transmission currently being investigated is the uncle of the girl who died from bird flu in Raniya, Iraq.

What should I do about this “bird flu”?

The best way to avoid avian flu is to avoid contact with birds. Do not try to hunt or feed birds while in Iraq. Do not touch or pick up dead birds. Wash your hands regularly, especially after being around someone who may be ill or shaking hands with someone sniffing from a runny nose. In addition to preventing the spread of other viruses, hand washing helps prevent the spread of avian flu. Consider carrying your own supply of hand sanitizer (such as Purell) if hand washing stations are not readily available. There is no evidence that avian flu can be contracted from properly prepared poultry, therefore, eating at the DFAC is safe.

Finally, do not add to rumors or try to diagnose your buddy with avian flu. If you (or your buddy) are exhibiting symptoms consistent with the “flu”-- fever, headache, muscle aches, and a dry, non-productive cough-- come to the TMC for an evaluation. Should a soldier develop flu-like symptoms, evaluation at the onset of symptoms will aid in the ability to treat and improve recovery rates. Each person will be closely evaluated by a physician or physician assistant, and provided appropriate medical care based upon the assessment. While treatment options exist, there has not been a single case of avian flu affecting an American soldier to date.



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CULTURAL CORNER WITH READY 9

By: CPT Patriquin

“READY 9”

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Bis ma'allah al-rahman al-rahim

In the name (bis ma') of God (Allah) the merciful (al rahman) the compassionate (al rahim).

You will often see this printed at the top of Arabic books, newspapers, poetry, contracts, etc. It's the Islamic version of “In God we Trust”. A good Muslim will also say this at the beginning of anything he deems worthy of doing well. He'll recite this short prayer before meals, before a speech, before meetings and before sex. (Seriously)



The Castle

There has probably been a fortification on the top of the hill in Tal Afar for as long as there have been humans in this area (At least 10,000 years). The Castle has likely served as the seat of government and power in this area for that long. It has undergone many changes over its long existence. The Assyrians probably had a small fort there, and later the Babylonians surely took the Assyrian one over and improved it. Later civilizations to rule the area, from the Persians to Greeks to the Romans would have occupied it and improved it in their own ways. The Castle as we see it daily in Tal Afar probably took the shape as we know it during the 14th Century under the early Ottoman Empire. The Ottomans had several distinctive castle features, such as the arched and tapering archery ports (to allow an archer a wide range of fire, while minimizing his exposure), to the round towers on the corners, and the pointed crenellations (spiked stones around the top edge of the wall). The Ottoman Empire fell after World War 1, and the British rebuilt the castle about the same time they built Ft. Tal Afar (1920s). More recently, the Castle was repaired in the 1970s, and hopefully we will get some of the same workers to help us with some planned renovations to the Castle walls.

Numbers

Last month we learned the numbers from 0 to 9, and how they're written. Now the numbers by tens:

10. A'ashra	60. Siteen
20. A'ashriin	70. Sabaeen
30. Thalathin	80. Famaneeen
40. Arba'aeen	90. Tisayn
50. Hamseen	100. Meea



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THIS MONTH IN AMERICAN MILITARY HISTORY

By: 1Lt Tom Campbell



Why is history important? Some of us may recall sitting in long, drawn out history classes during our school days thinking, “Why do I need to learn this stuff? It’s over with, what good is this class going to do me?” Well, I’ll tell you. As soldiers, it is important to know and understand where it is our military has come from. Sacrifices have been made by countless men and women to make our military and country what it is today. You can’t know where you are going if you don’t know where you have come from. As leaders it is important to know and understand the decisions made by military leaders of the past and its affect on their soldiers, the military, and the country. While much of our military history contains stories of courage, selflessness, and sacrifice, there are those events that have occurred that are unthinkable and unimaginable. It is from all these historical events that we as soldiers and leaders must learn; especially as we continue to write history today. With all that being said, here is a short history lesson for the month of March:

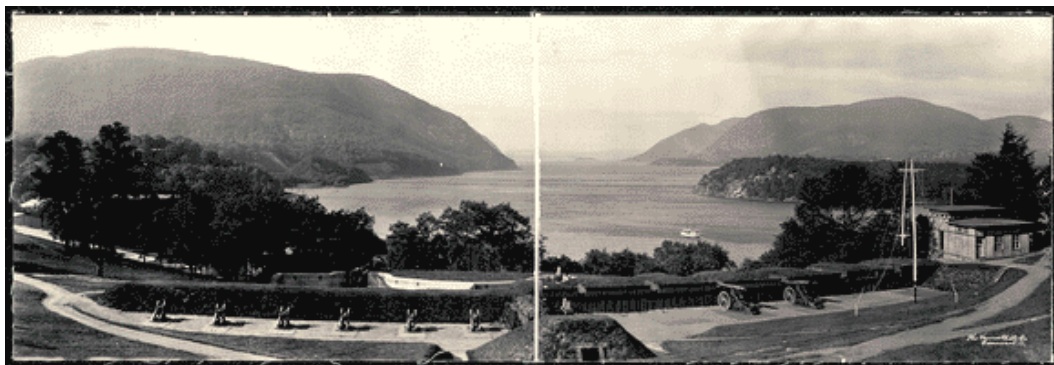
British Evacuate Boston

March 17, 1776, British forces were forced to evacuate Boston following General Washington’s successful placement of fortifications and cannons on Dorchester Heights, which overlooks the city from the south.

On March 4th, on order from General Washington, American Brigadier General John Thomas secretly led a force of 800 soldiers and 1,200 workers to the city in order to fortify the area. Americans deceived the enemy by firing a noisy barrage of cannons to cover the sound of the construction. British General Sir William Howe hoped to use the British ships in the Boston Harbor to destroy the American position, but a storm made its way into the area, giving the American forces adequate time to put the final touches on the fortifications and establish their artillery. The British quickly realized their position was indefensible, and set sail for a safe haven in Halifax, Nova Scotia, bringing an end to an eight-year British occupation of Boston.

Founders Day

On March 16, 1802, Congress approved legislation which established the United States Military Academy at West Point, one of the oldest military service academies in the world. Its strategic location on the west bank of the Hudson River, 50 miles north of New York City, has been continuously occupied by American forces since January 20, 1778. George Washington established his headquarters there in 1779. In 1780, Benedict Arnold, then in command of the post, tried unsuccessfully to betray it to the British.



Looking up the Hudson, West Point, Haines Photo Co, copyright 1909.



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Abraham Lincoln Inaugurated

On March 4, 1861, Abraham Lincoln became the 16th president of the United States. By the time he was elected President, seven states had seceded from the Union. Following the election, the lower South, fearing their rights were threatened, joined the other seven states and formed the Confederate States of America. During his inaugural address Lincoln promised not to interfere with the states rights, such as slavery, but he took a strong unyielding stance against secession and seizure of federal property. Six weeks following his inauguration, the Confederates opened fire on Fort Sumter in Charleston, South Carolina, firing the first shots of the Civil War.

Our National Anthem

On March 3, 1931, the Star Spangled Banner was adopted as America's national anthem. Francis Scott Key wrote the anthem during the War of 1812 as he watched the bombing of Ft. McHenry while imprisoned on a British ship.

The Massacre at My Lai

On March 16, 1968, a platoon of U.S. troops slaughtered 300 villagers in the South Vietnamese village of My Lai. This incident would later become the most publicized war crime committed by U.S. troops during the Vietnam War. 14 U.S. soldiers were charged with crimes. All those involved eventually had their charges dismissed or were acquitted by court-martial. The platoon leader was the only person to serve time for this massacre, serving 3 years in prison.

The Gulf War

On March 3, 1991, Iraq accepts the terms of a ceasefire, officially ending the Gulf War.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

On March 17, 2003, UK's ambassador to the UN says the diplomatic process on Iraq has ended; arms inspectors evacuate; US President George W. Bush gives Saddam Hussein and his sons 48 hours to leave Iraq or face war.

March 20, 2003, American missiles hit targets in Baghdad, marking the start of a U.S.-led campaign to oust Saddam Hussein. In the following days U.S. and British ground troops enter Iraq from the south.



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THE MONTH IN PICTURES

